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Hon. Mr. Ambler
Ambler

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TROP DE ZELE.

We may outrun

By violent swiftness that which we run at,

And lose by over-running."

Shakespeare.

(118 1-143)

I must apologise to the audience for using a French ~~title~~ phrase
as my title, seeing that our mother-tongue is able to express
almost every shade of meaning, but I have failed to come upon the
right English phrase. Too much zeal without knowledge is
cumbersome & fails to express just what I mean. Running after a
thing or, as Shakespeare has it, 'running at' falls ~~a shade too~~ short
too, so trop de zèle with its light half-humorous imputation will
have to serve our occasion.

Now, we cannot begin to think of our subject without some sort
of knowledge; we want to know what we are running after, or running
at, before we think of how ~~to~~ run.

I suppose we all have been reading & pondering ~~over~~ the Life of Florence Nightingale, each in his own way. Anyone who has been instrumental in setting a movement going will be reminded of the beginnings of that movement by the weariness & painfulness of Florence Nightingale's early labours.

Better than a quarter of a century ago we, too, went through labour (though not to be named in comparison) to bring forth a society which we then claimed to be unique in history, a body of parents associated for the purpose of acquainting themselves fully with the principles of education; not for the welfare of children (that is a consequence, & not a cause); not for child-study, for we take a child to be a human being, a person, like the rest of us, who does not lend himself to microscopic investigation; not to advance the science of education, because we doubt if education is a science; & if the methods of science can be applied to any branch of knowledge which, like history, poetry, education, is concerned with the spirit of man. No, our object, as stated in a pamphlet, oddly called the 'draft proof', some 3000 copies of which were distributed & disbursed with many of the persons who formed the first public opinion of a quarter of a century ago, our object was to associate parents for the purpose of acquainting themselves with the principles of education. Great were the heartsearch-

ings, many the disappointments, much the correspondence, but how amazingly we have been prospered!

I was told the other day that we had discovered parents. That is, I suppose, we found out that parents, instead of being obstacles in the way of education, for that was the notion then, are the persons most interested, & most zealous to take their part in the greatest work of the world.

I am most thankfully aware of how much is due to those zealous & inspired coadjutors who have infused vitality into the work for a long term of years with little or no help from me; & to those earlier fellow-workers, many of them gathered to their rest, but some breaking new ground with more than the old zeal; but they & I agree in thinking that it is to the responsive parent we owe our success.

My purpose to-day, ^{however,} is not to say nice things to parents but to say a cautionary word about a tendency which I have described as trop de zèle.

How the phrase would have amused us in the old days when apathy & indifference were supposed to characterize parents! And now good it is to know that now there are few to-day who do not know that the bringing up of children is the greatest thing in the

world.' I believe they knew it then but did not tell, that what we have been able to do is to collect many ^{tributaries of opinion} ~~views~~ into a strong current. But here is our danger; instead of pouring out ~~the~~ tributaries into the main stream, we are apt to run after any trickle of water destined to lose itself in a bog; ^{Here is the danger} of mistaken goal, not according to knowledge; ^{thus} ~~we~~ say we 'outrun that which we run at & lose by overrunning!'

What we of the P.N.E.U. 'run at' is a big thing, - a whole philosophy of education, which is practically a philosophy of life, because the children & we are equally persons, - designed for & pledged to an orderly ^{ed} life with definite aims.

Until the other day I thought that we, or shall I say I, was ploughing a lonely furrow. But about Christmas time a notice appeared in the Spectator of an important work (by Dr Heyrick Booth) dealing with the philosophy of Eucken. We shall shortly have an opportunity of knowing more about the great Philosopher of Jena, as London is to have the opportunity of doing honour to him; & perhaps many of us, like me, who have until lately been content with a vague notion of his teaching, may be glad of this opportunity. But my joy was very great to discover that for many years I had been working out a philosophy identical with his in many points, perhaps because we have both ~~been~~

ploughed with the same heifer. By a singular contradiction, Eucken does not profess himself to be a Christian; yet ^{he} confessedly founds his teaching very much upon the philosophy delivered in the Gospels. I think one or two of the points in which I am happy enough to find myself at one with this great man may serve to indicate what we 'run at' ^{in such a way as} should save us from the calamity of loss by over-running.

I take it for granted that this audience & the members of the P.T.E.U. generally 'mean intensely', if only by its starts are out, not in search of good plans, but of a sound philosophy of education, of which good plans are the natural outcome. So I shall bring forward for your consideration two outstanding principles of Professor Eucken's Philosophy which are also ours. One ~~was~~ ^{is} concerns the theory of education which we have developed, the other, the curiously successful practice ^{thereof} of education, the rationale of which we should, I think, keep before us. Dr Megrick Booth regrets that the Jena Professor has not treated of education but I think we are in a position to fill the gap because a ~~very~~ ^{long} system, which has been developed & applied for nearly a quarter of a century, turns out to be an oddly exact application of his principles to that which I have ventured to call the Great

work of the world.

Perhaps the outstanding feature of Eucken's philosophy is ^{that} his recognition of man as a spiritual being, having a sensible investment which adapts itself as it were grows to his spiritual manifestations. I would not be understood to say that Professor Eucken is the only philosopher concerned in this spiritual movement; Bergson, Boutroux, certain great men of our own, perceive that spirit is not modified, or in any serious way affected, by matter; but that matter, including the human brain, is entirely amenable ~~subservient~~ to spirit: that truth is of the spirit, not of the flesh, & is not ~~concerned~~ concerned finally with the well-being of men but with their clear thinking & well-knowing. To quote from Eucken's Main Currents of Modern Thought, - "The essence of the conception of truth, & the life & soul of our search after truth, is to be found in the idea that in truth man attains to something superior to all his own opinions & inclinations, something that possesses a validity completely independent of any human consent; ~~in~~ the hope of an essentially new life is thus held out to man, a vision of a wider, & richer being, an inner communion with reality, a liberation from all that is merely human. On the other hand, when ~~the~~ good of the individual & of humanity becomes the highest aim & the guiding principle, truth sinks to the level of a merely utilitarian

opinion. This is destructive of the inner life. All the power of conviction that truth can possess must disappear the moment it is seen to be a mere means. ~~True~~ Truth can exist only as an end in itself. ~~Q~~ 'Instrumental' truth is no truth at all. (Hypothetical?) But what has all this to do with giving Tom & Bessie such a sensible practical education as shall give them a good start in life, - Tom perhaps as a business man, Bessie as a wife & mother & member of society?

X

^{this}
There is indeed an immediate question; it is the urgent question of the day & one upon which we must all take sides. The whole trend of thought to-day is towards utilitarian education, & we take it for granted that the ~~whole~~ spiritual nature, that is, mind, heart & soul, is educated incidentally, as it were; that, in learning to cook a nice dinner, beautiful thoughts somehow find their way into Bessie's ~~mind~~ mind, say, of the wise & tender Providence which gives bread to men; that the making of an apple tart will bring refreshing thoughts of an orchard in bloom, & so on. Not a bit of it! If she is minding her business, her thoughts run upon the lines of her work with a never ending progression. Hundreds of dinners, thousands of apple pies, hundreds of improvements in the making of apple pies, - that is how mind works upon the material in hand

Of course Betty must learn to make apple pies & Tom must learn whatever stands for these in his case. What I wish to point out is that education is the concern of the spirit & that no smallest amount of incidental education comes out of practical utilities. On the other hand, every sort of practical utility forces itself out of spiritual development. As I have said elsewhere, - "I should be inclined to say of Education as Mr Lecky says of morals, that 'the Utilitarian theory is profoundly immoral'". To educate children upon any immediate end - towards commercial or manufacturing aptitude, for example, - is to put a premium upon general ignorance with a view to such special aptitude. The greater includes the less, but the less does not include the greater. Excellent work of whatever kind is produced by a person of character & intelligence, & we cannot do better for the nation than to prepare such persons for its uses".

But the economist need not throw us over as impractical persons: what we have to offer is a scheme which is able to give every child, rich or poor, the education he has a right to in the things of the spirit - poetry, pictures, history, literature & above all, religion; & enable him to take it with such facility that ample time is left for that other proper function of the school, the preparation of a child for his vocation.

In this way two lines of work, educational & vocational, may be carried on in the school^{at} there is need and opportunity for both; but that one should be mistaken for the other would be a serious calamity.

Every person with educational convictions should be a power in the land, but then he must know what he believes in; & must not go about the world like a yodel at a fair. This one thing we of the P.N.E.U. must, I think, hold fast, - that education is of the mind or spirit & not of the senses & muscles. These, no doubt must have their own training to do their own work, but let us not be deluded into the notion ~~that~~ a child is to be educated by the material influences brought to bear upon him from without, rather than by the ideas, the knowledge, the spiritual influences, that reach ~~him~~ him within.

We may not be able to receive Carlyle's saying that, - 'Matter exists only spiritually & to represent some idea & body it forth', ~~or~~ but the question of the age is, I think, - Is education of the flesh or of the spirit?

Here is the danger of that trop de zèle that I am anxious to indicate. Persons who care about education are ~~as~~ naturally fervid. They are sometimes too idle to take stock of what they know & realise what they believe, so they run about after

some new thing & see ~~xxx~~ no reason why the new notion should not fit very well into the loose bundle of concepts they have already got hold of. Now, the world was never more alive to the importance of education than it is to-day & the air is full of notions that masquerade as new notions. Conscientious mothers feel it is a duty to know & to try the last new thing; but let me entreat you & then to try the spirits whose they bear; every new & promising theory that I have come across is of the flesh & not of the spirit; ✓ (in using the word spirit I am not just now referring to religion at all but to that ^{immortal} ^{which} part of us ~~that~~ knows & thinks & feels).

Thoughtful men at home & abroad are seriously ~~###~~ uneasy at this trend of modern thought; we talk piously, for example, of freedom in education; & here I cannot resist ^{introducing} a serious warning (which Dr Booth quotes) from Professor Foerster of Munich. - "Human nature contains such remarkable contrasts that the freedom of one part is bound up with the subjection of another. Which part then is to receive freedom?.... it is of supreme importance to distinguish clearly & accurately, between true & false freedom...." The root error of many modern tendencies is the confusion of ^{true} ~~true~~ personal freedom with mere individual licence, of the higher with the lower self..... The more the lower self is granted freedom, the more hopeless does the development of personality become."

Another cult of the hour is the naturalism, ^{taught} developed long ago by Rousseau, & very much in the ascendant to-day. ^{Boys & girls} ~~A~~ ^{has} the books, is the cry. "Boys & girls must learn from things. They must learn to do the work they will have to do later & that is all that education can do for them. Let them make puddings, lay ^{bricks} bricks, learn to cast accounts, & whatever else they want comes incidentally."

This is the rock on which the nation threatens to split, a rock which we have been making for ^{for the last} ~~these~~ thirty years, & now, instead of changing our course we are heading straight ^{& sure} at full speed towards our ruin.

I have spoken so often on this subject that I shall ^{now} venture to quote Dr Booth's ~~words~~ forcible words instead of using my own,—"Much of the restlessness, discontent & spiritual uncertainty of the age is traceable to the failure of an educational system divorced from any truly authoritative, positive philosophy to furnish ~~those~~ those who have been brought up within it with a valid view of life as a whole & to ensure that inward, spiritual training which is the absolutely indispensable complement of rational development."

I need not say a word about the delightful facilities proposed to us for educating children through their finger-tips or, again, through the movements of the dance. ~~all of these~~ These schemes & a dozen others propose to accomplish the whole education of man; & every one of them ends where it began -

- with the flesh, the external life; leaving the spirit in no wise enabled for that struggle towards the spiritual life, the life of thought, of love, of endeavour, which is our true vocation.

Are the senses to be neglected? Are grace of movement, quickness at affairs, general preparation for life, things of no moment? These things are all important but each for its own sake; & to take up any one of them by way of education is a disastrous error. Nor can we play at picking up a bit here & there from one system & another. We must cultivate the eye for the joy of seeing, the hand for the pleasure & duty ^{of} doing, but not with a notion that education travels from without inwards.

Must then the educational alertness upon which we ~~may~~ rather pride ourselves be thrown away, as it will be if we may not go about looking for some new thing? On the contrary, I think that a great world-mission is open to members of the P.N.E.U. There is ~~no~~ reason to believe that we are carrying on in the quiet way in which natural forces work a far-reaching revolution, & if we do not exist as a society for nothing, we must each of us take our part in furthering this revolution. If we will believe it, the world is waiting for what we have to give; but we must know our principles, or, at any ~~rate~~ rate, the one grand principle,

that education is of the spirit & not of the flesh. "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing," is as true of things of the mind as of those of the soul. The material of education is knowledge, & the appeal to the mind must be direct; for no appeal through the senses carries beyond what is rightly called the sensuous nature.

Everybody knows that education is generally unsatisfactory; & many at home & abroad are beginning to look to us for such help as we have to give; to ^{render} ~~give~~ such help, should be, should it not? the definite life-work of every member of the P.N.E.U. who has taken the trouble to know our philosophy. As for opportunities, they occur at every street corner. Two or three of our members have used the leisure to such good purpose that an educational society of European & Egyptian ladies has already sprung ^{in Cairo} up, - a society with great possibilities. Only yesterday I heard from a friend that, "the other day I met Mr X the Head of the large Council Schools in -- who told me that a member of the P.N.E.U. had asked if she could meet him & his teachers & explain our principles: he says he is much interested in them & will call to see the papers you sent me." ~~and~~

I could multiply instances, but it is enough to say that every member of a Branch, every parent of a child in the School, possesses the means

means of giving vital assistance to her neighbours, rich & poor. And the opportunities are so frequent & the effort so delightful ~~and~~ that I think no space will be left for the sort of fictitious zeal spent in going about ~~either~~ to hear or ~~to~~ see some new thing, in the faith that everything is as good as everything else & that bits of everything combine to make a whole. But education is not a patchwork, it is a vital growth working according to its own laws; and we have reason to think that these laws, many of them old, a few of them new, all of them belonging to a comprehensive & vital whole, are the laws that we profess & hold.

The mind is very subtle & has a way of ~~mixing~~ mixing up things that differ, & properly while we speak of the ~~the~~ spiritual character of education the thoughts of some of us wander to what is called the 'sub-conscious mind', mystical intuitions, & other vague things which are taken account of by Pragmatic & Psychology. By the way, I wonder how far the lamentable increase of neurotic symptoms amongst us is due, not as we are apt to say, to our rapid living, but to a school of philosophy which holds knowledge in little esteem, & which takes 'self-expression' for the individual, & human well-being for the general, object of all endeavour. But, as Eucken has well said, - "Knowledge is not to be gained on the path of Pragmatism."

We do not seek for self-expression out to express those things which are beyond & without ourselves; & just as there are possibilities in our physical nature that it is the business of our life to struggle against & escape from, so in our psychical nature, ~~that~~ ^{as I call it}, our 'sub-conscious mind', are there inclinations & indications ^{all} of them leading to self-expression complacency, self-importance, self-expression, which it is one part of the battle of life to ignore & get rid of, because they are of the flesh & not of the spirit; & ^{they} are included by the Apostle when he says, - 'I keep under my body & ~~it~~ bring it into subjection.'

For these reasons which can only be very briefly indicated, we eschew educational means which proclaim that their object is self-expression, though we may do the things indicated for the simple sake of doing them. We dance, for example, not to seek self-expression in a rhythmic movement but for the joy of dancing & incidentally, for the sake of exercise & for pleasure in graceful movement.

The object of Education is not to give us the means of self-expression or of utility. We learn because knowledge is life; & the chief knowledge ^{is} that we know, ~~is~~ eternal, life.

Let me close this part of my subject by a few words from Eucken's Knowledge & Life, - "True Knowledge calls upon man not merely to reorganise what is given to him as a natural human

inheritance but to transform such an inheritance from its very foundation. The words of Kant are applicable in this respect: "Everything - even the most sublime thing - diminishes under the hands of man when he turns the ~~whole~~ idea into a mere utility."

II.

We come now to consider the serious questions of what a child should learn & of how he should learn. Here again we find ourselves working on a philosophic ~~axiom~~ axiom to which Bucken gives the name of Activism: that principle of struggle, striving against opposition, with which the Gospels have made us familiar & which belongs to intellectual & moral, ^{truly} ~~life~~ as much as to religious life. Out of this struggle, this Activism, proceeds something new, a ~~quickened~~ quickened life of thought or aspiration.

Now, the common Educational error is to cultivate Passivism in children; they are, as Carlyle says, 'poured into like ~~passive~~ a bucket:' teachers explain, tell, illustrate, expound, & question until there is never an intellectual crust left for a child's mind to bite at. We believe that to give a child his proper right of Activism, intelligent & imaginative effort, we have only to put books of literary value into his hands & let him deal with them in his own way, only securing that he knows by requiring him to tell what he has read. This telling shows that a spiritual process has taken place; something new, some little touch

Some quaint way expression, *has been set up*
of originality ² shows that spontaneous mental activity; & from this,
which would seem to be a small change in the ~~curriculum~~ ^{methods} of a school
the results are rather extraordinary. Indeed, from those two prin-
ciples, which coincide curiously with those of Eucken, we hope to ~~be~~
bring about a momentous educational revolution; - I mean, the recog-
nition of the spiritual character of education; & the application of
the principle of Activism. *P* As for what a child should learn
we believe that ~~a child's~~ ^{his} knowledge (like that of the infant
prodigy described by Wordsworth) should be, as far as may be,
encyclopaedic. Let us hear once again the description of the little
prig of the Maria Edgeworth School whom I have before this had occasion
occasion to mention; -

" With gifts he buccles o'er
As generous as a fountain, selfishness
May not come near him nor the little throng
Of flitting pleasures tempt him from his path;
The wandering beggars propagate his name,
Dumb creatures find him tender as a nun,
And natural or supernatural fear,
Unless it leap upon him in a dream,
Touches him not.....
A miracle of scientific lore.

Ships he can guide across the pathless sea
 And tell you all their cunning; he can read
 The inside of the earth, & spell the stars;
 He knows the policies of foreign lands;
 Can string you names of districts, cities, towns,
 The whole world over, tight as beads of dew
 Upon a gossamer thread; he sifts, he weighs;
 All things are put to question; he must live
 Knowing that he grows wiser every day
 Or else not live at all, & seeing too, ~~Each little drop of wisdom~~
 Each little drop of wisdom as it falls
 Into the dimpling cistern of his heart:

.....
 Oh! give us once again the wishing-cap
 Of Fortunatus, & the invisible coat
 Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood,
 And Sabra in the forest with St George!
 The child, whose love is here, at least, doth reap
 One precious gain, that he forgets himself.

We know him quite well do we not? There are only two things
 this marvellous boy
 which he lacks - a wise & understanding heart & the simplicity of
 childhood.

Of course he knew that he himself & not knowledge was the end & aim of all the teaching he received & the poor little fellow was never allowed that most generous of all childhood's pleasures, a passionate joy in knowledge for its own sake:-

"Many are our joys

in youth, but oh! what happiness to live

When every hour brings palpable access

Of knowledge, when all knowledge is delight."

We hold ourselves happy to have rediscovered this joy ~~for~~ for youth is so far as it has been lost. Children take to knowledge, as we give it to them through living books, with such eagerness & pleasure ^{and this} that half the time spent on routine work is saved; time which may ^{be} given when necessary to vocational ~~interest~~ ^{By this means} instead of educational work. ~~In this way~~, while the general demand for ^{practical} teaching in our schools is satisfied, boys & girls need not be defrauded of the intellectual delight, the resources & interests within themselves, which are the best part of life & for the lack of which the country & the world are suffering.

But here again comes in the danger of trop de zèle on the part of injudicious parents. Children are observed to learn so much & so easily & joyously that the temptation to put in a few extra subjects is irresistible; & in the spare time

which should be their own possession children are rushed about from class to class, from this eminent teacher to the other, in order that no accomplishment should be left unmastered. Happy for the child when he finds himself in the sanctuary of school where at any rate he has some natural freedom! That he is overworked is not the chief evil of this sort of grabbing at accomplishments. The child perceives that all this is done for his sake; the knowledge he gets is of the sort that puffate us, & he becomes an infant prig, losing that happy delight in learning which comes to him when knowledge for its own sake is put before him with inviting ~~simplicity~~ simplicity.

"They who have the skill

To manage books & things, & make them act
On infant minds as surely as the sun
Deals with a flower; the keepers of our time,
The guides & wardens of our faculties,
.....

when will their presumption learn,

That in the unreasoning progress of the world
A wiser spirit is at work for us,
A better eye than theirs, most prodigal
Of blessings, & most studious of our good

Even in what seem our worst, without *the howls*
the Paradox!

U Even in what seem our most unfruitful hours?"

We of the P.N.E. U. must order our ways carefully because we hold in trust a great charge. The nation is at the parting of the ways. We all recollect the discussion of the new Education Bill which, last month, united Liberals & Unionists, a drastic Bill granting to Local Authorities the power of extending the age of leaving school from 14 to 15 years, abolishing the half-time system, giving power to require attendance at continuation classes, & so on.

~~*The debate was very*~~ The Times 'The debate was helpful & suggestive; & though it met with strong opposition, in the main,' says The Times, 'the discussion of the Bill was something like a chorus of praise & ^{it} the bill passed its second reading with a large majority'. If it should become law, here is our great opportunity. We should be able to satisfy both those who clamour for vocational instruction & those who further the Bill for the sake of humane learning. ^{much} ~~Something~~ *however,* may be done with things as they are. Boys & girls of all classes may be sent out into the world with intellectual resources which shall gladden their lives as well as with the necessary sense-training & manual dexterity. But the

passing of such a bill as this would increase our opportunities.

not long since
 Lord Haldane warned us that while the British workman finished his education at thirteen, ^{not} in many parts of the continent ~~that~~ training was now going on till 16, 17, 18, & ~~now~~ not a training merely in general education but in the calling which the workman was going to exercise in the future. Here is, as I have said, our opportunity. We who have seen the great joy that our children find in humane learning ought to urge ~~that~~ ^{the} duty of giving such learning to children of all classes. Schoolmasters & mistresses are, we find, eager to hear what we have to tell them, eager to try what has proved successful; & because the labour we delight in physics pain, because children learn with ~~soon~~ very great facility when they are given the manner of learning proper to their nature, I think no system of education affords such opportunity as ours for the combination of vocational & educational work. Here is opportunity for the employment of our zeal & here is a field in which it would be hard to ~~show~~ ^{too much zeal} ~~show~~ ~~too much zeal~~.

30 JAN 1915

Dear Sir,

I was much concerned to see by letters in the last (brilliant) number of the Times Educational Supplement that my raillery, designed only to clear the air, had given some umbrage. May I remind you, ~~xxx~~ Sir, that my single mention of the Dottressa Montessori was not only respectful but deferential, if only for the sake of her tender respect for little children, an object lesson ⁶ for us all. I have diligently studied her book, - by the way, the original version in Italian exhibits the fine, free script of the children to more advantage than does the English translation, - but I have not made the pilgrimage; had I done so I should have been converted; children always convert me; a guttersnipe making Catherine Wheels has, before now, given me a very shock of conversion; but, to what? That is the question as regards what the lady calls, for convenience in writing, 'my method'; & it is only after serious consideration that I venture to say, ^{I think} ~~that~~ the adoption of this method would be disastrous.